



# Bulletin of the BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

Vol. 95 No. 2

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The six hundred and ninety-third meeting of the Club was held at the Café Royal, 68 Regent Street, London, W.1, on Tuesday 18th March 1975 at 7 p.m.

*Chairman*: Prof. J. H. Elgood, M.A., present 23 members and 10 guests.

Dr. D. W. Snow gave an address of much interest on the preparation of the atlas of African non-passerines and showed slides of maps of special importance.

The six hundred and ninety-fourth meeting of the Club was held at the Café Royal, 68 Regent Street, London, W.1, on Tuesday 20th May 1975, at 7 p.m.

*Chairman*: Prof. J. H. Elgood; present 22 members and 20 guests.

The subject for the evening was the Australasian Region. Sir Landsborough Thomson opened with a summary of his impressions of the regional avifauna, and especially that of New Zealand, obtained on trips before and after the 1974 I.O.C. Dr. C. M. Perrins followed, dealing in some detail with birds and habitats, mainly of northern and central Australia, and the Chairman, Professor Elgood, concluded with an account of bird haunts and species he had recently seen around Port Moresby and elsewhere in Papua New Guinea and neighbouring islands. All the talks were illustrated by slides and led up to a general discussion.

## *Forthcoming Meetings:*

Tuesday, 15th July 1975, Senior Common Room, South Side, Imperial College, South Kensington; entrance—south side of Prince's Gardens, S.W.7 (off Exhibition Road and N. of Victoria & Albert Museum) 7.00 p.m.: R. S. R. Fitter on "The work of the Survival Service Commission and the problem of extinction". Buffet supper, cost £2.40 (including service and V.A.T.); cheques should if possible be sent to the Hon. Secretary before the meeting, failing which they should be given to the Hon. Treasurer on arrival at the meeting.

Tuesday, 16th September, Café Royal, 6.30 p.m. for 7 p.m.: Lord Medway on "The Ornithology of the New Hebrides"

Tuesday, 18th November, Café Royal, 6.30 p.m. for 7 p.m.: Patrick J. Sellar on "An Ornithological selection from the new British Library of Wildlife Sounds" illustrated by tape recordings.

## An unrecorded specimen of *Collocalia papuensis* Rand

by S. Somadikarta

Received 30th October, 1974

The Three-toed Swiftlet, *Collocalia papuensis* Rand, is presently known from 13 specimens of which details have been published (some additional material is reported to be under study: see Schodde 1973—Ed.). These birds were collected from Hollandia (now Jayapura) and Idenburg River area, between sea level and 1800 m altitude, in the western part of New Guinea (Rand 1941, Somadikarta 1967).

(continued on page 44)



## BALANCE SHEET, 31st DECEMBER 1974

[illegible]

We have prepared the above Balance Sheet and annexed Income and Expenditure Account from the books and records of the Club and certify them to be in accordance therewith.

KNIGHTWAY HOUSE,  
20 SOHO SQUARE, London, W1V 6QJ.  
7th April, 1975

NORTON KEEN & CO.,  
*Chartered Accountants.*

In the collection of the Museo Civico di Storia Naturale "Giacomo Doria" (MSNG), Genoa, Italy, I have found another unrecorded specimen of *C. papuensis* (MSNG 26535 - Cat. 76E). It is labelled "L. Loria - Viaggio di Lamberto Loria - Nuova Guinea Britannica" and erroneously identified as *C. fuciphaga* (Thunberg). Salvadori (1896) stated that more than 37 other skins out of 173 specimens collected from 27 May to 12 September 1891 in the eastern part of New Guinea were also improperly labelled. He designated each of these specimens as "esemplare senza indicazioni", or "esemplare senza cartellino".

Birds collected by Loria seem always to have been carefully labelled, which suggests that this solitary *C. papuensis* specimen was neither collected nor examined by him. Salvadori (1896) reported that from 1891 to 1893, Loria was accompanied by Amadeo Giulianetti, who therefore may have been responsible for the inadequately labelled specimens.

The only two specimens of swiftlets obtained by Loria from the eastern part of New Guinea were identified by Salvadori (1891, 1896) as *C. fuciphaga* and *C. esculenta*, respectively. He apparently overlooked the existence of a *C. papuensis* in the collection, as no account appeared in his publications (Salvadori 1890, 1891, 1896).

I have examined Salvadori's "*C. fuciphaga*" specimen (MSNG 26534 - Cat. 76D). It is a female, collected by L. Loria (field no. 967) from Igibirei (Kemp Weltch) on 6 August 1890. This swiftlet has four toes, unfeathered tarsus and throat lighter than abdomen. The measurements (in mm) are: wing 107.5, central tail feathers 39.0, outer tail feathers 46.0, exposed culmen 4.0, and tarsus 10.0. Based on these data, I prefer to consider this swiftlet as a member of one of the *C. vanikorensis* (unrecognized) population. I could not locate the *C. esculenta* specimen in the MSNG collection.

The measurements (in mm) of the unrecorded, mistakenly identified Three-toed Swiftlet are as follows: wing 120.5, central tail feathers 46.0, outer tail feathers 50.5, exposed culmen 5.5, and tarsus 12.0. The tarsus is densely feathered, the throat clearly silvery grey. The 6th and the 7th primaries of the bird were in moult, the total primary score is 66 (see Newton 1966, Somadikarta 1968). The moult data of this specimen suggest that the bird was collected between March and June (see Somadikarta 1967). From the end of May to the end of June 1891, Giulianetti was collecting in Kapa-Kapa, a village on the seashore about 30 miles east of Port Moresby (see Salvadori 1896). Accordingly, I conclude that this Three-toed Swiftlet specimen was collected from Kapa-Kapa, between the end of May and the end of June 1891, during Loria's trip in the eastern part of New Guinea.

I have examined most of the swiftlet specimens from New Guinea in major museums in the United States and in Europe. To the best of my knowledge, the specimen MSNG 26535 - Cat. 76E is the first specimen of *C. papuensis* Rand ever collected.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Professor E. Tortonese, Director of the Museo Civico di Storia Naturale "Giacomo Doria", Genoa, for permission to examine the collections in his care, and for other kind facilities. I also thank Dr. S. Kadarsan, Director of the Museum Zoologicum Bogoriense, Bogor, for critically reading the manuscript and suggesting improvements. Research on the taxonomy of the swiftlets has been partially carried out during my tenure as National Research Council Visiting Research Associate at the Division of Birds of the Smithsonian Institution.

## References:

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## A bill deformity in Richard's Pipit and the presence of *Mycobacterium*

by Peter F. Woodall

Received 19th November, 1974

### INTRODUCTION

A female Richard's Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae* was collected on 25 August 1971 from a pebble beach of a lagoon of the Zambesi River, Chewore Wilderness Area, Rhodesia (15°37'S, 29°55'E), during an expedition of the Kirk Biological Society, University of Rhodesia. It was noticed immediately that most of the upper mandible was missing, clearly the result of previous damage and not of a shot wound during collection. The premaxilla ended just distal to the external nares in an irregular dark-coloured growth. The specimen is now in the Queen Victoria Museum, Salisbury (NM75138).

### MICROBIOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

An attempt was made to isolate any micro-organisms present in this growth. The growth was surface sterilised with absolute alcohol and under sterile conditions it was removed to distilled water and then broken up to form a suspension. Nutrient agar plates were innoculated with the suspension, and good growth was observed after 1-2 days. Microscopic examination of this culture revealed chains of rods (gram-positive) and these were acid fast using the Ziehl-Neelsen technique (Jacobs & Gerstein, 1960). No spores were found after spore staining using malachite green solution (Jacobs & Gerstein, 1960). This combination of characters (chains of rods: gram-positive and acid fast) suggests that the micro-organisms are *Mycobacterium*. Breed, Murray & Smith (1957) state that members of this genus form a natural spectrum from saprophytes (some of which may be potentially parasitic), proceeding through the tubercle bacteria to the highly host dependent leprosy bacilli. Of course, in this case it is not known whether the bacilli were present in a parasitic role, having actually caused the reduction of the mandible, or in a saprophytic role, living on dead material following a previous injury. The bacilli isolated did not appear to conform to any of the species described by Breed *et al.* (1957), however their rapid growth on agar may indicate that they belong to the saprophytic forms. Pomeroy (1962) suggests that disease may lead to bill abnormalities but writes that there appears to be no records of this.